



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## ALASKA UNDER THE RUSSIANS—INDUSTRY, TRADE AND SOCIAL LIFE\*

When the management of the Russian American Company passed into the hands of Hagemeister the first charter was about to expire.<sup>1</sup> Captain Vasili N. Golovnin was sent on the *Kamchatka* to Sitka in 1817, to audit the accounts and make a statement of the condition of the affairs. His report was very unfavorable to Baranof, both personally and in regard to his business methods,<sup>2</sup> although he seems personally to have pretended friendship for him.

The trade carried on by the American ship captains among the Indians of the Alexander Archipelago, the Sounds as the Russians termed it, had long troubled the Company. Baranof had turned it to account by buying the cargoes and thus removing the competition.

---

\*This is the second of two articles by Mr. Andrews entitled, *Alaska Under the Russians*. The first article was published in this Quarterly for July, 1916, under the sub-title of *Baranof the Builder*.—Editor.

<sup>1</sup> In the preparation of this article I have drawn chiefly from the following sources:

Khlebnikof, K., in *Zhizneopisanie Aleksandra Andreevicha Baranova*, [Biography of Alexander Andreevich Baranof.] St. Petersburg, 1853. There is a copy in the Governor's office at Sitka, and one in the Bancroft Library at the University of California. Klebnikof was the chief of the countinghouse at Sitka under the Chief Managers following Baranof, remaining until about 1832. On the "Blarney Stone" at Sitka, are his initials, "K. KH. 1832."

Tikhmenef, P., *Istoricheskoe Obozrenie Obrazovanie Rossiiskii Amerikanskoe Kompanii* [Historical Review of the Organization of the Russian American Company.] St. Petersburg, 2 vols. Vol. I, 1861; vol. II, 1863. In Governor's office and in Bancroft Library.

**Materiali dlya Isotrii Russkikh Zaselenii po bergegam vostochnavo okeana.** [Materials for the History of the Russian Settlements on the Shores of the Eastern Ocean.] St. Petersburg, 1861. In 4 parts. The 1st part is by V. M. Golovnin; the 2nd part by Captain-Lieutenant Golovnin; the 3d part by K. Khlebnikof; the 4th part consists of extracts from the writings of Golovnin, Khlebnikof, Lutke, Lazaref and others. In Governor's office and in Bancroft Library. V. M. Golovnin was an officer of the Russian navy who came to Sitka in the sloop *Diana*, the first Russian ship of war to visit the colonies, in 1810. He returned in 1817 in the sloop *Kamchatka*. A copy of the voyage of 1815-'19 is in library of the University of Washington at Seattle. Captain Golovnin, a naval officer, was sent in 1861 to make a report on the condition of the colonies. More complete description of the **Materiali** will be found in Bancroft, *History of Alaska*, pp. 515-16.

Davidof, Gavril I., *Dvuknoe putashestvie v' Ameriku Morskikh Ofitserof Khvostova i Davidova, pisannoe sim poslyednim* [Two Voyages in America by Naval Officers Khvostof and Davidof, written by the latter.] St. Petersburg, 1819. In two parts. Translated by Ivan Peterof. In Bancroft Library.

Markof, A., *Russkie na Vostochnom Okean Puteshestvie Al Markova* [Russians on the Eastern Ocean Voyage of Al. Markof.] St. Petersburg, 1856. In Bancroft Library.

Veniaminof [Bishop John.] *Zapiski ob Ostrovakh Oonalaskinskago Otdela* [Letters Concerning the Islands of the Unalaska District.] St. Petersburg, 1840, 2 vols. In Bancroft Library. The same is found in another edition in the library of the University of Washington, at Seattle.

**Morski Sbornik** [Marine Miscellany.] St. Petersburg, 1848, et seq. Translation in Bancroft Library.

<sup>2</sup> "In 1790, the merchant Baranof, who for 27 years after governed the country, was created Collegiate Councillor, and received the Cross of St. Anne, 2nd Class, and became famous on account of his long residence among the savages, and still more so because he, while enlightening, grew wild himself, and sank to a degree below the savage."—Golovnin, in **Materiali**, (Petrof trans.), part I, p. 53; Tikhmenef, part I, p. 244.

The naval officers who were now at the head of affairs, in order to discredit Baranof's methods and also to remove this opposition, prevailed on the Russian government in 1821 to issue an ukase forbidding foreign vessels coming within 100 miles of the shore under penalty of forfeiture.<sup>3</sup>

In 1821, a new charter was granted to the Company, with much the same terms as the previous one, but under it the Chief Manager must be selected from staff officers of the Russian navy. A clause provided that they might trade at sea with neighboring nations.<sup>4</sup> The trade with China by sea afterwards being opened threw into their hands practically a monopoly of the tea trade, which had previously been conducted by caravans overland to Russia by the way of Kiachta.

The result of the prohibition of the American trade was a loss to the Company, for the freign boats delivered goods at Sitka for less than they could be brought from Russia by the Company. Freight from Russia across Siberia was from 540 to 630 silver rubles per ton, and by the Company's ships from Kronstad was from 193 to 254 silver rubles per ton. The Hudson's Bay Company's boats carried goods from England to the colony for 50 to 78 rubles.<sup>5</sup>

The United States, though its ambassador, protested against the order, and in 1824 a treaty<sup>6</sup> was made by which American boats were entitled to the right to trade on the coast, but after 1832 they were not able to maintain themselves against the Russian American Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, and they withdrew.<sup>7</sup>

The Russian American Company had now become settled firmly in the country. The fur trade was in regular channels, as established and organized in past years, ships passed between the Russian ports and Sitka, mechanics and artisans plied their trade, the officers and employes brought their families, and the trading post became a community where every one had a part in the life and moved in well ordered channels.

The administration of the colonies consisted of the Chief Manager, the Board of Directors, and the Accounting Department.

The Chief Manager was appointed by his Imperial Majesty from candidates presented by the Company, who must be selected from staff

---

<sup>3</sup> Tikhmenef, I, App., 27; *Alaska Boundary Tribunal*, Case of the United States, App., p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Second Charter of the Russian American Company, 1821.

<sup>5</sup> Tikhmenef, part i, pp. 371-72.

<sup>6</sup> Treaty of Auril 17, 1824.

<sup>7</sup> Boundary Case of the United States, p. 266. Report of Chief Manager Wrangell, April 28, 1834. Lazaref, Voyage, 1822-24, in *Materiall*.

officers of the naval service. Their term of office was five years and they were to reside in New Archangel.

The head office of the Company was in St. Petersburg and there the Board of Directors held their meetings. The chief of the Accounting Department had his office in Sitka, in the building at present occupied by the United States postoffice.

There were no courts of law in the colonies, but the chief manager had the power to decide minor offences according to police regulations, or to refer them to a special commission whose decision was final, and send a report of the penalty imposed to the general administration of the Company.

In criminal cases he might refer the cases to the Colonial Administration Council, or to a special commission appointed by him, which, in case of inability to agree, might transfer the proceedings to the nearest court of justice in Russia. This proceeding held good in military cases where the crimes did not come within the common military law.

He had the power to appoint and remove, and to regulate the salaries of the commanders of vessels, chiefs of the colonial affairs selected by him, clerks, etc. He was required to prevent any trading in furs, walrus tusks, or other product to which the Company had the exclusive right. He was also to see to the education and training of the children at the Company's expense. His yearly accounts were to contain full information of the condition of the colony, the natives, Creoles, hospitals, educational establishments, fur-trade, agricultural and domestic enterprises, and also the requirements of goods, materials, and provisions, of the work accomplished and the buildings constructed.

The produce of the settlers was to be purchased at their own prices, but furs according to an established price list. Special care was enjoined that in assigning land to colonial citizens that the rights of the settled natives were not to be encroached upon, and that the citizens support themselves without oppressing the natives.<sup>8</sup>

The population of Sitka in 1818 was 190 Russians and 72 Creoles.<sup>9</sup> There were also 173 Aleuts at the port. In 1863, on January 1st, there were 978 Russians and Creoles.<sup>10</sup> Of these there were 150

---

<sup>8</sup> Regulations of the Russian American Company. See *Tikhmenef*, part ii, App., p. 37, *et seq.*

<sup>9</sup> Of these there were 110 Russian and Creole women. See *Khlebnikof*, in *Materiali*, part iii, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Of the Russians 418 were men and 50 were women. See *Tikhmenef*, II, 244.

Creoles who were considered as Russian subjects, and as having the rights of the class of tradesmen, unless granted the privileges of some other class for special merit. Those who distinguished themselves by industry and capability might be granted the same privileges enjoyed by other Russian subjects in the Company's service. They were legally defined as being the offspring of Europeans or Siberians and American (native) women, or of Americans and Europeans and Siberian women, and their children remained in the same class.<sup>11</sup>

Those who were educated in the colonies by the Company were required to serve in the Company's pay for not less than 15 years, counting from their 17th year. Those taken to Europe and educated at the expense of the Company in the higher schools, and who received appointments as pharmacists, military or civil officers, etc., could not leave the service of the Company for 10 years, but received a salary and subsistence during that time. Those trained as mechanics in Russia were required to give 10 years' service.

In the service of the Company were many Creoles who occupied responsible positions as masters and officers of vessels, in clerkships and other situations. The illegitimate Creole children were brought up at the expense of the Company.

The native tribes were divided into two classes, the settled natives, comprising the inhabitants of the islands of Kodiak, the Aleutian group, those of the American coast as the Kenaitze, Chugach and others; and the unsettled, or wild tribes.

The settled natives were considered as Russian subjects and formed a separate class, subject to the Russian laws and entitled to government protection, but not required to pay taxes or tribute. They were required to sell their furs to the Company and must render service to them as hunters, etc., on certain terms. The hunters worked under a Russian *peredovchik* or foreman, were furnished with bidarkas, and other implements; the furs they secured were shared with the Company, and were sold to them at a price fixed by the management. They were paid entirely in trade at the Company's stores. When they came in from the hunt they delivered the equipment to the *bidarschik*, or officer who took charge of them, stretched and dried their skins and delivered them to the magazines, and took their credit to trade at the store. There they bought cotton prints, calico, gray and blue, blue Chinese cloth, frieze blankets, snuff-boxes, tobacco, tea, sugar, etc., or anything that might suit a savage taste. They always gave some-

---

<sup>11</sup> Tikhmenef, II, App. 55.

thing to the church, generally furs, which the priest sold to the Company's stores at a special price given to them.<sup>12</sup>

They were governed by their *toyons*,<sup>13</sup> or chiefs, under the surveillance of elders appointed by the colonial government from the trusted employes of the Company.

Over the wild natives, as the Kolosh and the tribes of the interior of Alaska, they exercised but little control. Their intercourse with these, outside of the Sitka kwan,<sup>14</sup> being chiefly limited to securing their trade on the best possible terms. In 1821 the Sitkas reestablished their village near the old site; by the time of Etolin's administration, in 1840, they became more friendly, and he promoted the friendship by various means. He held a fair at Sitka, something after the custom of Russia at Nizhne Novgorod, where they might bring their furs; and he employed the young men as sailors and laborers.<sup>15</sup> The lease of the right to the fur trade on the mainland to the Hudson's Bay Company, lost to the Russians the trade of that region, and in later years, through the Hudson's Bay Company selling liquors to them, and the mismanagement of Chief Manager Rudakof, many of the other kwans among the islands became estranged and went to the British posts.

The garrison at Sitka was 180 men of the Siberian battallion and about the same number of man-of-war sailors. The soldiers were employed at various occupations, some in attendance on the officers, others cared for the cattle, or followed trades, as joining, coopering, blacksmithing, etc.; they worked on the fortifications and cut timber in the forests. The last was preferred to any other as the life in the woods appealed to the most of them. Many did work for which they received extra pay and thus added to their meager income, which was 440 rubles per year, in scrip worth about 20c per ruble, including all allowances.

Their uniforms consisted of pants, cloak, and necktie, which were furnished by the military commander of Siberia, and paid for by the Company. For other clothing they paid cash. The lower classes of soldiers did not wear uniform, and their allowance for same and other

<sup>12</sup> Regulations of the Russian American Company. See Tikhmenef, II, App., pp. 56, et seq.

<sup>13</sup> *Toyon*, a Yakut word, brought from Siberia by the Russians. See Davidof, II, 113.

<sup>14</sup> "Besides the general appellation of Thlinkit, the Kolosh have other local names, for instance, the Sitka call themselves *Sitkakwan*."—Veniaminof, *Zapiski*, etc., part iii, p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> Khlebnikof, *Materiali*, part iv, p. 102.

equipment, amounting to 27 rubles 44 kopeks per annum was credited to them.

They were given one meal per day at the public kitchen, consisting of a stew of salt or fresh fish, or of beef boiled with vegetables. They were allowed to take food to the barracks and warm it on the stoves for other meals, and about their quarters at any time of day might be seen kettles, pots, and pans, simmering over the fires.

With all the meagerness of pay and allowances but few soldiers were indebted to the Company, in fact nearly all had something to their credit. On July 1, 1860, their credits were 57,030 rubles, scrip, or about \$11,400, and an additional amount of 22,592 rubles on uniform account. Many had from 700 to 1,000 rubles, and two had nearly 2,000 rubles, or \$400 each.

They kept watch and ward eternally against the Kolosh. Six posts of two men each as sentries guarded the town day and night, and two were stationed on each ship in the harbor. In spring and summer reveille was beaten at four in the morning, and tattoo at nine at night. From tattoo, throughout the night, signals were called at every half hour, and a patrol inspected all posts and visited all the ships in the harbor.

Notwithstanding these precautions, at times, Indian spies entered the town and even climbed into the old ship *Amethyst*, lying dismantled on the beach near the Indian town, and stole material and carried it away.<sup>16</sup>

There were about 60 guns in the batteries and fortifications and 87 stored in the arsenal and other places about the harbor, from 80 pound mortars to falconets.<sup>17</sup>

When Hagemeister assumed the management of the Company in 1818, he found many of the buildings were decaying, and he made extensive improvements and built some buildings, including a blockhouse. His successor, Yanovski, built a blockhouse, a wharf with a dock, and a windmill.

Mouravief from 1821-26 built a new house for the manager on the *kekoor*, or Baranof Hill, a blockhouse in the upper fort, a battery of eight guns on the water front, and other buildings.

Before 1833 there were built at the Ozerskoe Redoubt, ten miles southwest of Sitka, a blockhouse with eight guns, a stockade, barracks, flouring mill, granary, tannery, fishery, etc.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part ii, pp. 61, et seq.

<sup>17</sup> Tikhmenef, part ii, p. 328.

<sup>18</sup> Khlebnikof, in *Materiali*, part iii, p. 96.

Most of the buildings transferred to the United States were constructed between 1835 and 1850:<sup>19</sup> the Baranof Castle about 1836,<sup>20</sup> the Clubhouse by Etolin in 1840, and the Cathedral of St. Michael was dedicated in 1848.<sup>21</sup>

Sawmills were constructed at an early date. Baranof had one at Voskressenski Bay in 1793<sup>22</sup> to saw the lumber from the *Phoenix*. Resanof ordered one from Russia when he was at Sitka in 1806.<sup>23</sup> In 1860, there were two mills at Sitka, one in the town and one on Serebrennikof Bay, on the Kirenski River (Sawmill Creek), four miles up the bay to the east. The mill in the town used both water and steam power, and had in connection with the plant a planing machine, machinery for sash and cornices, and for shingle-making. The saws were from eighteen to forty-eight inches in diameter. The steam plank saw has 25 saws and was of 30 horse power. The mill at Sawmill Creek used water power, had 20 saws, and was constructed under the administration of Manager Tebenkof.

Two flouring mills ground the breadstuffs brought from California and Chile. One of these was in the town of Sitka and the other at the Ozerskoe Redoubt. The one in the town was run by water power, and had stones of the finest French burr. The stones for the other mill were of granite, quarried and cut on the shores of Globokoe Lake.<sup>24</sup>

A storehouse held the *lavtaks* or seal and seal lion skins, used for making bidarkas, and a tannery prepared the hides of various kinds. Hides of cattle from California were tanned in Sitka for sole leather, and among the shipments of Hutchinson Kohl & Co., from there to San Francisco in 1867-8 were large quantities of leather of all kinds.<sup>25</sup>

A shop for repair of nautical instruments, a smithy, joiner shop, cooper shop, and a bakery, provided for the needs of the community on those lines, while a ropewalk and sail loft made necessary articles for the vessels.

<sup>19</sup> United States Record of Public Buildings.

<sup>20</sup> "The present very substantial house erecting for the Governor and his establishment, is about 140 feet in length, by 70 feet wide, of two good stories, with lofts, capped by a lighthouse in the center of the roof."—Sir Edward Belcher, *Narrative of a Voyage Round the World, 1836-42*, (London, 1843), p. 96.

<sup>21</sup> Church Records of Sitka.

<sup>22</sup> "Dwellings were first put up and a rude sawmill erected over a small stream with considerable waterpower."—Tikhmenef (translation in Bancroft Library), II, App., 86.

<sup>23</sup> Resanof in a letter dated February 15, 1806, at Sitka, in Tikhmenef, II, App., 240.

<sup>24</sup> Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part II, pp. 72-73.

<sup>25</sup> Customs Records of Alaska for 1868.



A well equipped brass and iron foundry, with a machine shop in connection, occupied a place to the east of the church, and there were constructed and repaired the engines for the steam vessels, of which several were built between 1839 and 1867. The machinery for the tug "Muir," of seven horse power, as well as the hull, and two pleasure boats of two horse power each, were the product of the local workmen before 1841.<sup>26</sup> The workmen were Russians and Creoles, and every master had a number of Creole boys for apprentices. Many of these made good workmen as they had a quick perception and a natural inclination for mechanical pursuits.<sup>27</sup>

Many articles for export were made in the shops and foundry. The first bell was cast in Kodiak in 1793, under the direction of Baranof, and it was of a weight of 208 pounds.<sup>28</sup> Plowshares and spades were made and shipped to the California market,<sup>29</sup> and among the exports from Sitka, in 1868, were two shipments of bells, one of eight in number, aggregating 2,500 pounds, and the other of five.<sup>30</sup>

Out of the tallow brought from the colony of Ross candles were made, more than 120 poods (4,320 lbs.) being used for the purpose each year. These were furnished to the officials for their use, each receiving 30 per month from September to May, and half that number during the rest of the year.

Bricks were made in the colonies, mostly in Kodiak or in Nicolofsky. The clay at Sitka was not in sufficient quantities for use for the purpose.<sup>31</sup> The first that were made in Alaska were by Baranof at Kodiak, about 1795, and out of these 1,500 were shipped to Shelikof at Okhotsk.<sup>32</sup>

Charcoal was prepared in large quantities, and kilns were kept burning continuously, each occupying about 15 days' time to complete, and yielding from 70 to 150 baskets of the coals.<sup>33</sup> A great deal was used to smoke the rats out of the ships before sending them to sea with cargoes.

The charter gave the Company the right to the minerals in the earth, although little use was made of the privilege of mining. Baranof found deposits of iron ore, and endeavored for years to reach

---

<sup>26</sup> Sir George Simpson, *Narrative of a Journey Round the World, During the Years 1841 and 1842*, (London, 1847, 2 vols.), II, 189.

<sup>27</sup> Tikhmenef, part II, p. 330; Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part II, p. 73.

<sup>28</sup> Baranof to Shelikof, May 20, 1795, in Tikhmenef, II, 94.

<sup>29</sup> *Materiali*, part III, pp. 96-97.

<sup>30</sup> Customs Record of Alaska, 1868.

<sup>31</sup> Khlebnikof, in *Materiali*, part III, p. 99.

<sup>32</sup> Baranof to Shelikof, May 20, 1795, in Tikhmenef, II, App., 95.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

the native copper deposits of the Copper River, which he understood to be on the headwaters.<sup>34</sup>

In 1848, the Company sent out the mining engineer Doroshin, who made investigations along the coast from Baranof Island to Cook Inlet. He found limestone on Sitka (Baranof) Island; coal; "a kind of earth indicating diamonds"<sup>35</sup> at Kootznahoo; coal and graphite on Kodiak Island; and coal and some gold on Cook Inlet. The coal was developed at what was known as English Bay (Port Graham); drifts of 1687 feet in depth were made in 1857 and ensuing years; machinery was installed; and 500 tons were sent to California for a commercial experiment. From 1857 to 1860, 2,700 tons of coal were produced, most of which was used on the Company's steamers, as the California venture had proved unprofitable. During 1860 a fire destroyed the buildings and retarded the work which was not very vigorously prosecuted thereafter.

In 1863, a contract was projected with Halmar Furuholm, a mining engineer, by which they were to turn over to him the mining resources, but as the Company did not secure a new charter, the contract was not made.<sup>36</sup>

Shipbuilding was carried on in the colonies from 1793 until the close of the Russian occupation. The shipyard at Voskressenski (Resurrection) Bay was in use but a short time. There does not seem to be any record of any building being done there after the construction of the *Phoenix* in 1794, as the *Delphin* and the *Olga* were built at Elovoi (Spruce) Island in 1795, near St. Paul's Harbor<sup>37</sup>; the *Yermak* and the *Rostislaf* at Yakutat, and after the establishment of Novo Arkangelsk the shipyard was at that place. An American named Lincoln built the first vessel on the ways, the brig *Sitka*, and received as his pay the sum of 2,000 rubles. He rebuilt the old ship *Alexander*; in June, 1807, he laid the keel of the *Otkrietie*, which was launched July 16, 1808; the same year he began the construction of the *Chirikof*, and repaired the *Juno*, an American ship bought by Resanof in 1805.

---

<sup>34</sup> "It has long been my intention to collect some of the American copper on Copper River, but until now the Lebedef troubles have prevented it, and I don't know how soon it will be possible."—Baranof to Shelikof, May 20, 1795, in *Tikhmenef*, II, 94. "The exploration of Copper River, or the locality where native copper is found, was the constant object of Baranof's life." Davidof, part II, p. 139. One of his men went 300 versts up the river, going up the east fork where the rich deposits have since been found but secured nothing. On a second trip he was killed by the natives "for appropriating a copper colored maiden."—*Ibid*.

<sup>35</sup> *Tikhmenef*, II, 249; Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part II, p. 103.

<sup>36</sup> *Doklad Komiteta* [Report of the Committee], (St. Petersburg, 1861), p. 583.

<sup>37</sup> *Zhizneopisanie*, p. 25.

When Lincoln left the employ of the Company, in 1809, the construction of new vessels ceased for a term of years.<sup>38</sup>

In 1807, the *Myrtle* was purchased of Captain Barber and renamed the *Kadiak*; and in 1808, the Russian Government ship *Neva* was transferred to the Company; in 1813 the *Lady* and the *Atahualpa* were bought of Americans and were afterward known as the *Ilmen* and the *Bering*. The ship *Amethyst* was also secured.

A number of ships were built at Okhotsh for the Company, among them the *Maria*, the *Aktzia*, *Polyfem*, *Sitka*, etc., and in later years others were constructed at Abo, Finland.

At Ross Colony, Grudinin, who had worked with Lincoln at Sitka, built from the California live oak, the galotte *Rumiantzof* in 1816-18; the brig *Buldakof* in 1819-20; the brig *Volga* in 1821-22; and the *Kiachta* in 1823-24<sup>39</sup> The *Brutus* and the *Lapwing* were purchased in 1818, and the brig *Arab* in 1824. In 1825, they owned 10 vessels, of which there were three of American build, one Mexican, and one from Okhotsk, three built in Ross, one in Sitka, and the remaining one was from Finland.<sup>40</sup>

In the year 1827 construction was resumed at the Sitka ways and the *Unalaska*, *Bobr*, *Sivutch*, *Karluk* and *Aleut*, small coasting boats, were launched. In 1829, the *Ourup* of 300 tons was commenced, the *Lady Wrangel*, a retimbered American boat, was put in service, and from 1839 to 1841, the brig *Promissel*, the steamer *Nikolai I*, the steam tug *Muir*, and two pleasure boats propelled by steam were built. The steam tug *Muir* would seem to be the first steam vessel to be entirely constructed on the northwest coast of America, and thus to the Russians belongs the honor of building the first sailing ship and also the first steam vessel in the Alaskan waters.<sup>41</sup>

Shipbuilding continued at Sitka until the close of the Russian regime and the *Politofsky*, so well known on the western coast, was one of the last to be constructed there.

Agriculture was one of the minor industries of the colonies, for fur gathering was the great and all-absorbing pursuit, but gardens were raised at all the main stations. At Sitka about 1,000 barrels of potatoes were produced, on the best crops; they were used for home consumption and to provision vessels coming to the harbor.<sup>42</sup> American trading ships and Russian men-of-war purchased as much as 100 bar-

---

<sup>38</sup> *Materiali*, part iii, p. 12.

<sup>39</sup> *Id.*, p. 145.

<sup>40</sup> *Id.*, p. 101.

<sup>41</sup> Tikhmenef, II, 330.

<sup>42</sup> Khlebhikof, in *Materiali*, part iii, p. 127.

rels at a time from the inhabitants. The work in the gardens for the Company was done by the Aleuts, who were paid at the rate of a ruble a day for the service, and potatoes, turnips, lettuce, and cabbage, with cucumbers, etc., in hotbeds, were the principal products. Potatoes were also produced by the Kolosh and by them sold to the Russians and to the trading vessels along the sounds between the islands.<sup>43</sup>

About 10 cows were usually kept at Sitka for milking; the hay for their food was cut in the natural meadows at the head of the inlets about Katleanski Bay, and was brought to town in small boats. Chickens and pigs were kept at Sitka.<sup>44</sup> Ducks were brought to Unalaska in 1833, and multiplied rapidly. Goats were imported in 1825, but they annoyed the Aleuts by pasturing on the dirt roofs of their barabaras, so they were killed.<sup>45</sup>

The efforts to ripen grain were fruitless, and the breadstuffs were brought from California, from Chile, or were purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company in later year. In 1841, there were 30,000 poods (18,000 bushels) of wheat at Sitka, after supplying the other districts and sending 2,000 poods to Okhotsk.<sup>46</sup>

Of fish there was an abundance in the waters of the whole district. At Sitka the supply of salmon was largely procured from the Ozerskoe Redoubt, where a fishery was maintained, from which, in addition to the fish they consumed fresh, and preserved for use at the post, they salted from 300 to 500 barrels for sale each year. In 1858, there were 1,070 barrels salted. A thousand poods of salt were used each year in preparing the supply. For the ten years between 1850 and 1860 they took 70,000 fish per year there.<sup>47</sup>

On Kodiak Island most of the fish were taken at Karluk and a fishery was maintained there from the first year of the settlement at Three Saints. Here up to 1860 there was no use made of the salmon beyond drying it for *yookali*, of which product there was about 380,000 pounds prepared each year.<sup>48</sup>

Of halibut they took as much as 8,000 pounds in a month from the bay.

Game was brought to the Kolosh market, as the place constructed for traffic with the Thlinkits was called, by the natives and sold for

---

<sup>43</sup> Markof, p. 79.

<sup>44</sup> Khlebnikof, in *Materiali*, part iii, p. 135.

<sup>45</sup> Veniaminof, *Zapiski*, part iii, p. 74.

<sup>46</sup> Tikhemenef, part i, p. 346.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, part ii, p. 237.

<sup>48</sup> Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part ii, p. 105.

Russian goods; "a deer for five yards of calico," says Markof;<sup>49</sup> according to a list of prices fixed by the Chief Manager. Many deer and mountain goats were sold there, and during the winter of 1861-62, which was an exceptionally severe season, there were 2,774 animals brought there.<sup>50</sup>

An American ship, the *Bacchus*, came from San Francisco in 1852, to get a cargo of ice,<sup>51</sup> that used in California up to that time having been brought from Boston around Cape Horn. He loaded 250 tons, for which he paid \$18,750.00, or \$75.00 per ton. A company was then formed in San Francisco, called the American Russian Company, that entered into a contract with the Russian American Company to take 1,000 tons of ice yearly at the price of \$35.00 per ton. This contract continued until 1855, and after that 3,000 tons were taken per year at \$7.00 until 1860. Ice houses were built at Sitka, but ice not forming thickly enough at that place to produce the required amount, other houses were built at Wood Island, near Kodiak, with a capacity of 6,000 tons. The ice was broken and sawed by a special saw, worked by horsepower, and was handled by Kolosh laborers at Sitka, who received one ruble per day. The Russians and Aleuts did the work at Wood Island.<sup>52</sup> The American Company continued, for many years after the transfer to the United States to conduct a trading business on the western islands.

But little use of the timber was made by the Russians except in the construction of ships and buildings and for charcoal. Their exports were light, a cargo being taken to Chile in 1826 by Etolin, which was exchanged for breadstuffs.<sup>53</sup> Between 1852 and 1860, 8,416 logs were cut at Sitka.<sup>54</sup>

During the earlier years of the Company's business their trade was almost entirely with the natives, and was conducted with goods brought across Siberia from Russia, then shipped by sea from Okhotsk. The furs gathered were returned over the same route and a large part of them were sold to China through Kiakhta. In later years came the trade with English and American boats, exchanging furs for the goods they brought. In 1803-06, the first Russian boats came round the world and from thenceforward more or less merchandise was brought from Russia by sea. In 1806, Resanof took Russian goods to San

---

<sup>49</sup> Markof, p. 72.

<sup>50</sup> Tikhmenef, II, 238.

<sup>51</sup> Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part II, p. 189.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107; 124.

<sup>53</sup> Tikhmenef, I, 346.

<sup>54</sup> Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part II, p. 189.

Francisco, which he exchanged for breadstuffs and other food for the settlement at New Archangel. In 1817, Hagenmeister visited San Francisco to trade and to secure the release of Aleuts who had been captured from sea otter hunting vessels cruising along the coast by the Spanish. From this time forward this trade was continued, more for the purpose of procuring the necessary supplies than for trade purposes. In 1825, the brig *Kiakhta* traded goods of the value of 29,060 rubles and purchased provisions of the value of 29,803 rubles, which shows the general balance of the transactions.

With the Kolosh there was some traffic in furs, reaching its maximum between 1830 and 1840. During these years a trading vessel was sent each year through the channels from Lynn Canal to Portland Channel, to trade for peltry. In earlier years Chief Manager Mouravief had said: "The Company derives no profit from this trade, but it must be maintained in order to gain the friendship of the Kolosh and accustom them to intercourse with the Russians."<sup>55</sup>

After the lease to the Hudson's Bay Company, in 1840, of the right to the fur trade of the mainland from Portland Canal to Cape Spencer, the Russian trade with the natives of the islands decreased until it practically ceased. The causes were summed up by the historian of the Company as being: that rumors were spread by the rival company that the Russians had turned this trade over to them; that the British paid higher prices for furs and carried goods that were not to be had at Sitka; and that they sold liquors and firearms and ammunition in violation of the agreement of 1841<sup>56</sup>

The superior quality of the goods very probably had much to do with it, for the Hudson's Bay blanket was the standard all along the coast in the Indian trade, and to this day is preferred to any other.

In 1860, the Russian steamer *Nikolai I* was sent to trade in the straits between the islands, but secured upon the trip only 40 skins of poor quality, of various kinds, notwithstanding the prices offered were far higher than that paid at any post in the Company's dominion to other fur gatherers.

The trade in the north was also demoralized by the whalers, who sold to the Eskimos and the Chukchees all kinds of goods, but principally firearms and intoxicating liquors, and secured much of the fur of that region. The managers of the Company asked to be permitted to use the same methods in dealing with the natives, and the auditor

---

<sup>55</sup> Khlebnikof, in *Materiali*, part ii, p. 88.

<sup>56</sup> Tikhmenef, II, 350.

for the Company, Golovnin, in his report in 1861, favored it being permitted.<sup>57</sup>

The early fur hunters, or *Promishileniki*, were a drinking set of men and, whenever the opportunity presented itself, would drink up everything they possessed. Some of them would barter their clothing for drink and then be carried to the ship naked to begin their voyage. As the organization of the Company became more complete; when authority was better recognized; when a different class of men were employed, drinking decreased. In 1841, the Company's Regulations forbade the sale except in small quantities, and under certain restrictions, and an agreement was made with the Hudson's Bay Company by which sales to the Indians were forbidden.

The Americans frequented the coast and sold intoxicants, and to this the Russians objected. In 1829, the American bark *Volunteer*, under Captain Charles Taylor, sailed to Kyganie, traded with the Indians, they became drunken, a quarrel arose in which an Indian was killed and the mate of the vessel badly wounded. They sailed for Sitka to get medical attention from the Russian surgeon, which was freely given, but the General Manager said: "If American gentlemen will sell arms, ammunition and liquors to the Indians, they must suffer the consequences."<sup>58</sup>

Rum was generally substituted for whiskey, and was issued to the employes at the rate of eight gills per year, at the Company's expense, on certain church holidays. In addition to this, the Chief Manager had a right to issue it after fatiguing labor and under urgent conditions, so the laboring classes received from one to two gills per week. To other inhabitants it was sold in limited quantities at established prices, but the lower employes only obtained it upon the written application of their immediate superior. The regulations for sale were frequently violated, for many would give exorbitant prices for small quantities. For an example, a shoemaker would ask 30 or 35 rubles for a pair of boots, but would exchange them for a bottle of rum, worth to the Company's store the sum of three and a half rubles.<sup>59</sup> On the voyages made during the early years of the colony when all liquors were brought across Siberia by caravan, a liquor was brewed from different herbs, called *quass* by them and used as a preventive of scurvy.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part ii, p. 113.

<sup>58</sup> Jonathan S. Green, *Journal of a Tour on the Northwest Coast in 1829*, (New York, 1915.)

<sup>59</sup> Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part ii, p. 59.

<sup>60</sup> "The hunters bought at Kamchatka sweet grass, cleaned nettles, and lambsquarter. The nettles were used as yarns for fishing nets, while the other two served to make a drink similar to quass, a good preventive against scurvy."—Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part i, p. 51, note.

Over the counter in the Company's store in New Archangel was a price list showing all the principal commodities kept for sale and the sales price to the people of the town. The prices were in the assignats or scrip of the colony, and were established by the Chief Manager.<sup>61</sup>

The money that was in use in the different posts was the scrip or credit checks of the Company, at first issued on walrus hide, afterward on slips of paper. The denominations were 10, 25, and 50 kopeks, and 1, 5, 10, and 25 rubles. In 1817, there were 17,000 rubles in circulation; as they became worn in traffic they were taken up, and in 1822, 30,000 rubles were issued, of which 6,000 were placed at Kodiak, and 3,000 at each of the posts of Ross and Unalaska.<sup>62</sup>

For the purpose of purchasing foodstuffs in California, and for other matters requiring coin, the Company kept a certain amount of the money of other countries, principally Spanish piastres, that were received from trading vessels and men-of-war that entered the port. For January, 1825, there is shown in the accounts the sum of 7,591 piastres, but these were not allowed to go out in circulation among the people.<sup>63</sup>

Among the Kolosh, tanned deer skins were used as currency. There were also among them much of the *hiaqua*, or small sea shell (*Dentalium*) used on Puget Sound as money by the Indians, and which they called *Tzukli*. This was bought by the Russians at about 30 rubles per 100 in 1825.<sup>64</sup>

Under the second and third charter the Company had a practical monopoly of the tea trade, and they transacted an immense business which yielded large profits. From 1821 to 1841 the amount of this commodity transported from China to Russia was 72,814 chests, valued at 9,316,342 rubles. Between 1835 and 1840 the profits were from 40 to 80 rubles, silver, per box, but in 1845 it had fallen to six rubles four kopeks, silver.<sup>65</sup>

At Sitka and at Kodiak hospitals were maintained, and of the one at Sitka, Sir George Simpson, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, said: "In its wards, and, in short, in all the requisite appointments, the institution in question would be no disgrace to England."<sup>66</sup> January 1, 1862, there were in the Company's service in the colonies, three doctors (one at Ayan), 11 apothecaries and sur-

<sup>61</sup> Khlebnikof, in *Materiali*, part iii, p. 92.

<sup>62</sup> Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part ii, p. 120; Khlebnikof, in *Id.*, part iii, p. 107; Dall, W. H., *Alaska and Its Resources*, p. 350.

<sup>63</sup> Lutke, in *Materiali*, part iv, p. 148; Khlebnikof, in *Id.*, part iii, p. 107.

<sup>64</sup> Khlebnikof, in *Materiali*, part iii, p. 90; Lutke, in *Id.*, part iv, p. 146.

<sup>65</sup> Tikhmenev, I, p. 375; Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part ii, p. 121.

<sup>66</sup> Simpson, *Journey, etc.*, II, 190.



geon's assistants, surgeon's and apothecaries' apprentices five, and two midwives and two assistants.<sup>67</sup>

During the first years of the settlement at Sitka scurvy was common during the winter, as conditions improved and food supplies became better it was eradicated, until 1853, when an epidemic of this complaint visited the town and of 64 persons attacked there were nine who died. Typhoid fever also came in the same year and 13 died. The measles caused the death of over 300 persons in the Company's dominion during 1848.

A terrible visitation of smallpox came in 1837-39, which killed thousands of the natives before they would permit vaccination. This scourge visited the country again in 1862, but owing to the efficient regulations enforced by the Company, only a few died and it did not go farther than to Sitka, coming from the southeast. During Etolin's administration 1,200 were vaccinated at Sitka, and during Furuhelm's management he sent to California for vaccine and distributed it at every station.<sup>68</sup>

Venereal disease was very prevalent for many years and caused the management much trouble. After the disease had been stamped out in the colonies it would be communicated to the inhabitants at Sitka by the Kolosh, who became infected from the crews of sailors who came trading along the shores. It was finally completely eradicated from all the westward posts and at Sitka was practically suppressed before the close of the Russian regime.<sup>69</sup>

The citizens of Sitka lived a busy and uneventful life. The occasions that disturbed the usual serenity of the quiet, beautiful village on the northern island were the arrival of ships from far-off Russia, their departure for the return voyage, or some great church festival.

Of church holidays there were many, and the chimes of the Cathedral of St. Michael rang out long and frequently on the spruce clad shores.

Ships with news from home and friends were few and far between. From 1849 to 1852 there were 14, an unusual number, for those were busy years and brought more than the quota of ordinary years, but in the preceding 45 years there were only 41 vessels that made the voyage.<sup>70</sup>

The Chief Manager lived in the mansion on the kekoor, in what was known as the Baranof Castle to Americans in later years, and at

<sup>67</sup> Tikhmenev, II, 245.

<sup>68</sup> Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part II, p. 89; Tikhmenev, II, 243.

<sup>69</sup> Golovnin, in *Materiali*, part II, p. 86; Tikhmenev, II, 245; Surgeon's report, cruise of the Corwin, 1881, p. 17.

<sup>70</sup> *Morski Sbornik*, November, 1852, p. 416.

his table sat the Captain of the port, the secretaries, and others of the higher class in the colony, who constantly dined with him by general invitation. The next lower class, for the Russians are exacting as to their grades of society both in law and in custom, were the civilian masters of vessels, the accountants, clerks, engineers, etc., who lived at the club that was organized by Etolin in 1840.<sup>71</sup>

The amusements were few and simple; boating on the waters of the beautiful harbor; quiet rambles along the road known as the Governor's Walk to the deep woods of the *Kolosh Reka*, or Indian River; perhaps a climb up the wooded slopes of Mt. Verstovia, among the masses of maidenhair fern, and the rest must be the social meetings among the people of the town.

Dinners were given in the mansion of the Chief Manager, at which there would be present the bishop and priests, the naval officers, the secretaries, the accountants, the clerks, masters of the vessels, etc., often to the number of 60 or 70 persons.<sup>72</sup> Every one dressed in his best and most were in uniform, for the employes were entitled to wear the uniform of the Department of Finance.

There were grand balls given at the mansion on the kekoor at which the dancing continued all the night until four in the morning. "Quadrilles and waltzing were kept up with great spirit, and I was not a little surprised to learn from our good friend and host, that many of the ladies then moving before us with easy and graceful air, had not an idea of dancing twelve months before," says one visitor.<sup>73</sup>

The first mistress of the mansion who came from Russia to Sitka was Lady Wrangell, and the wife of Chief Manager Kupreanof is said to have crossed Siberia to join him in the northern post among the islands.

Russian hospitality is world famous and the people of Sitka upheld the traditions of the race. Dinners, balls, and festivities of all kinds were frequent and the weddings were elaborate affairs, with a ceremony an hour and one-half in length.

The festival of Easter was one of the greatest of the many church holidays. All dressed in their finest apparel, attended the services in the church; where they stood throughout the entire ceremony; then they went about the town, carrying gilded eggs to present to their friends, and greeting them with the salutation, "Christ is risen."

The shipping in the harbor presented a busy scene with from ten to fifteen vessels at anchor or loading and discharging cargo at the

<sup>71</sup> Tikhmenev, II, 244.

<sup>72</sup> Simpson, *Journey, etc.*, II, 185.

<sup>73</sup> Belcher, *Voyage, etc.*, I., 105.

wharf.<sup>74</sup> Ships were preparing for exploring voyages or loading furs for Okhotsk or Kronstad.

Before sailing the Chief Manager went on board for an inspection, the men and officers dressed in their finest uniforms, and every appointment was seen to be in perfect order. On the deck was a monk and two assistants to bless the ship before she sailed on her voyage; he sprinkled the flag with holy water, the company partook of a collation, and the tug took the ship slowly out through the Eastern passage between the spruce clad islands. There was a parting salute from the guns of the batteries; then the sails were spread to the winds that blow off the slopes of Edgecumb.

Then the people of New Archangel went back to their accustomed occupations, the sorting of furs, the work of the mills, the many homely tasks about the village, while the sentries walked their beats along the stockade.

C. L. ANDREWS.

---

<sup>74</sup> Simpson, *Journey, etc.*, II, 198, gives a list of 13, in 1842.